

Clubs Policy – Feedback to Parents

December 2018

The Khandallah School Board of Trustees would like to thank parents and the school community for their time in submitting on the Clubs Policy and for your patience in letting us consider the submissions received. We think this has been a valuable exercise that has moved forward our understanding of the concerns of our community. We also hope that the discussion has built awareness within our community not only in respect of the context in which the Board operates but also in respect of the concerns of other community members regarding religious clubs in our schools.

Based on the feedback received the following decisions have been taken:

- The Board will incorporate feedback on the Clubs Policy in response to the submissions.
- We will monitor progress on the current Ministry of Education consultation on Guidelines for Religious Instruction and, once these are released, we will review the Clubs Policy against these guidelines.
- Due to the current ongoing pay negotiation – where workload is a core issue – the Board will not consider additional activities that increase the workload of teachers (such as the supervision of clubs) until this negotiation is completed.
- The Board will release the Religious Instruction Policy for consultation in term 1 2019.

Once again, we would like to thank parents and the school community for their submissions on the policy. We set out more detail on the findings below.

Summary of Clubs Policy Feedback and Outcomes

We received 47 pieces of feedback on the Clubs Policy from 34 individuals/families from the 311 families within our community. Most of these were current parents with 1 submission from a staff member and 3 pieces of feedback received from other stakeholders. This is far more than we generally receive regarding policy reviews.

Feedback was able to be broadly categorised into four key themes:

1. Religious Instruction at Khandallah School
2. Inclusion of Religious Clubs in the Clubs Policy
3. Clubs Policy Administration in General
4. How will Religious Clubs be overseen

While the consultation was not aimed at soliciting feedback on religious instruction at Khandallah Schools, many submitters took the opportunity to provide feedback on this point. While feedback was that submitters did not feel religious instruction was appropriate it needs to be remembered that a structured consultation on religious instruction might yield a different answer. This is because all parties may not have felt that this was the question at hand and did not give their views on religious instruction but rather focused on the policy. Notwithstanding this observation on the submissions, we thank submitters for this feedback. ***The Board currently has a draft policy in development on Religious Instruction. This will be released early in term 1 2019 for consultation.***

The second key topic from the feedback was whether religious clubs should be included in the Clubs Policy. Many expressed a view that religious clubs were not acceptable. However, the structure of the consultation may have not directly elicited responses in support of religious clubs. The comments relating to religious clubs are given below.

- *Supporting inclusion of religious clubs in the policy*
 - Feel the club supports choice
 - Feels a religious club will nurture children spiritually
 - Wants the club because they are Christians
 - Including religious clubs supports diversity
 - Supports the policy
 - Need to not exclude religious clubs in deference to 'hidden curriculum' that underlies the NZ curriculum
- *Does not support inclusion of religious clubs in the policy*
 - Should not consider religious clubs due to an objection to religious instruction in schools
 - The Clubs Policy was being used as a vehicle for the introduction of religious instruction
 - Religious clubs will exclude others, are discriminatory and may contravene the Bill of Rights Act and Human Rights Act
 - Kids can't distinguish between a 'school' and 'non-school' activity if teacher are present and therefore may think the club material is part of the curriculum or the teacher/school endorses it
 - Peer pressure on other kids to attend
 - Teacher resources will be stretched by religious clubs

We agree that there are a number of issues to be considered as to whether religious clubs should be offered. The following points are key considerations:

- The Ministry of Education is currently consulting on Guidelines for Religious Instruction in Schools <https://www.education.govt.nz/ministry-of-education/consultations/open-consultations/draft-guidelines-on-religious-instruction/>. This consultation closed on December 7 and will contribute valuable material as to how religious clubs should be managed.
- Our staff are currently in negotiations over pay and conditions. One of the key issues is workload and supervision of a religious club at lunchtime would add to this burden. We are therefore mindful not to increase workload.

We will take into consideration these issues when approached by new clubs once the Clubs Policy is finalised.

We also had feedback on the Clubs Policy itself. These were largely discrete issues and are detailed below.

- *Processes for introducing new clubs*
 - No process for organisations to be invited to run a club
 - Process required for how organisations apply to run a club
 - Align with School mission and values
 - Need more guidance on motivation of club providers (i.e. value for money) and how this issue will be assessed/managed.
 - What if children start a club? How would this be managed

- Clarity required on 'management' versus board
- *Clarifying how clubs relate to the curriculum*
 - All clubs should be opt-in
 - Clarify that clubs are extra-curricular activities
 - Need clear delineation between external and internal clubs.
- *Practicalities of running clubs*
 - Vetting might be too onerous for all clubs (e.g. parent coaches)
 - How will club materials be assessed as good quality

These points will be incorporated into the policy as follows:

- Review club selection procedures to ensure that processes are clear at all points
- Provide clarification that all clubs are opt-in and review language on external and internal clubs
- Consider whether parents should be exempt from vetting (except if their role in a club is professional) and consider guidance on 'good quality' materials.

Finally, we also received feedback on how a religious club should be run. Parents and the Community raised the following points:

- *Controls on Attendance*
 - Policy fair because it is opt-in
- *Controls on Content*
 - How will not evangelising be monitored
 - How will club materials be controlled?
 - Clubs must disclose their religious objectives (i.e. don't hide behind values statements).
- *Controls on Providers*
 - Need to have clear expectations on CEC volunteers given their perceived poor record.
 - Need a neutral supervisor to ensure compliance with rules
- *When the club could be held*
 - Disingenuous to state that school is closed at lunchtime
 - No impact on school time at lunchtime.
 - Support Religious club after school
- *Commercial terms*
 - Support revenue being brought in from RI club
- *Process/Policy*
 - Transparency in process required
 - Clarify that both Board and Management may veto religious clubs
 - Remove reference to Hauora
 - Definitions required for 'evangelise' and 'closed for instruction'

We agree that there should be transparency on process and controls on attendance for any religious club. We also note the concerns about how to control access to materials and ensure that definitions of 'evangelise' were well understood by volunteers and parents.

In terms of timing of the activity, many felt that it was not correct to state that the school was closed as lunchtime as their kids were still at school. It needs to be clarified that, while parents don't take their kids home at lunchtime and teachers supervise your children, school is understood to be

'closed for instruction' at lunchtime. This legal status allows for clubs to run and for religious instruction to be undertaken during that time. The Board agrees that this status could be made clearer through regulation.

We think the concerns raised by parents and our community will enhance a policy on the management of clubs. We will incorporate these into the Policy. However, we will monitor the outputs of the consultation on the Guidelines for Religious Instructions currently underway by the Ministry of Education and review the Clubs Policy following the release of these Guidelines.

Kind regards

Khandallah School Board of Trustees